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SUBJECT: Israel-Egypt: Taba Negotiations Continue 

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NESA M#86-20041

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[redacted]  
Central Intelligence Agency

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Washington, D.C. 20505

## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

21 March 1986

Israel-Egypt: Taba Negotiations Continue [redacted]

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Summary

Israel and Egypt, each with different political agendas in mind, are working out details for submitting the border dispute over Taba to arbitration. While Tel Aviv wants to accelerate the normalization of relations--including a summit meeting--Cairo is dragging its feet until all arbitration arrangements are finalized. [redacted]

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Several contentious points remain, including:

- Arrangement of the arbitration process
- Selection of a neutral judge
- Specific questions for arbitration

\* \* \* \* \*

In mid-January, Israeli's Inner Cabinet unanimously approved submitting the border dispute with Egypt over Taba to arbitration. The decision was a major political victory for Prime Minister Peres and underscored the effectiveness of his patient style of fashioning government consensus on vital issues. Peres gradually persuaded Vice Premier and Likud leader Shamir to accept the package deal with Egypt, which calls for stepping up the normalization of relations, returning the Egyptian ambassador to Tel Aviv, and holding a summit between Peres and President Mubarak in return for Israel's agreement to arbitration. [redacted]

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Likud politicians also are satisfied with the outcome of the vote on Taba. Their demands forced Peres to include a longer

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted]  
[redacted] the Arab-Israeli Division, Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Information as of 21 March 1986 was used in its preparation. Questions or comments should be addressed to Chief, Arab-Israeli Division, [redacted].

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government by the time an arbitration process is actually underway--if Peres rotates positions with Shamir as called for in the coalition agreement. [ ]

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The timetable for implementing the package deal is somewhat uncertain. Israeli officials would like the summit to take place as soon as possible to demonstrate to the public the tangible benefits of the Taba decision. Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Weizman was in Cairo in late January and was expected to have urged Mubarak in this direction. The Egyptians, however, do not want to schedule the summit and probably will not return their ambassador to Tel Aviv until all the details of the arbitration process are worked out. [ ]

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Israeli and Egyptian negotiators continue to meet alternately in Cairo and in Israel to discuss the specific arrangements for the arbitration process. Among the issues still to be decided are the language of the arbitral question, the process of selecting one neutral judge to join one Israeli and one Egyptian on the arbitral panel, and whether the judges should be restricted to choosing between the Egyptian and Israeli claims or whether they may determine that the border lies elsewhere. These issues could pose significant problems to both parties, suggesting that the Taba dispute is far from disappearing from the Egypt-Israel agenda. [ ]

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